

# RAPA NUI JOURNAL

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## 1989 Habitation Site Excavation on Easter Island

by Christopher Stevenson, Ph.D.

For the third consecutive year, intensive archaeological excavations were conducted at prehistoric residential sites under the supervision of Dr. Christopher Stevenson and Eloisa Pollack, Archaeological and Historical Consultants, Inc., and Jose Miguel Ramirez, Fonck Museum, Vina del Mar, Chile. Three teams of Earthwatch volunteers constituted the excavation crews.

During the 1987 and 1988 excavation seasons, efforts had been directed toward residential site types located within 2 km of the southern coast in the vicinity of Hanga Poukura. With the assistance of the Instituto de Estudios, Universidad de Chile, Isla de Pascua, a small "habitation" site in the central part of the island was selected for the 1989 excavation. The site (10-241) consisted of a scattered pavement of flat irregular stones situated on the southern slope of Mt. Terevaka. Two crude *paenga* with pecked cupules were identified with the surface cluster. These stones would have served as ground supports for the house superstructure. Artifact densities on the surface of the site were extremely light and consisted entirely of obsidian debitage and basalt flakes.

Based upon the distribution of surface material the site was defined as a 10x22 meter rectangular area. A total of 24 2x2 meter excavation units were excavated and provided even coverage within the site boundaries. Field methodology involved a combination of arbitrary and natural levels for the excavation units.

Two distinct depositional contexts were identified within the site area. On the eastern edge, deep alluvial deposits had accumulated from the mouth of a small arroyo that was located just beyond the northern site perimeter. These sediments reached over a meter in depth in places before decomposing bedrock was encountered. Within the north profile of excavation unit N2W0, a relic root impression was tentatively identified as palm through comparison with modern palm roots supplied by Sr. Velasco of the agricultural development program.

The western 60% of the site area consisted of a thin upper level of slopewash that was underlain by a medium brown loam. The interface between these two levels was the prehistoric living

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## MARQUESAS ROCK ART PROJECT 1989

by Sidsel Millerstrom

The 1989 field trip to the Marquesas Islands was conducted between August 23 and September 23. Expedition members were Edmundo Edwards, Marja Svenson and Mr. and Mrs. J. Lovell.

Alfonse Puheini was our local guide. The project was made possible by Maeva Navarro, director of the Département Archéologie in Papeete, Tahiti.

The project's ultimate goal is to survey the entire Hatiheu valley on Nuka Hiva, documenting all the rock art in the process. It is hoped that our thorough research may become a model for future research in the other valleys of the Marquesas. This field season in the Hatiheu Valley we documented 154 rock art sites. This represents 1070 individual petroglyph motifs plus 3 *tiki* statues.

Several of the eastern ridges towards Anahoe were surveyed, but few rock art sites were located. These sites contain few, relatively uncomplicated, motifs. This is the most arid part of the valley and inhospitable for settlement, containing no major river systems. Sharp ridges and steep slopes have contributed to erosion, causing much of the top soil to wash away. The only vegetation is dense, knee-high ferns.

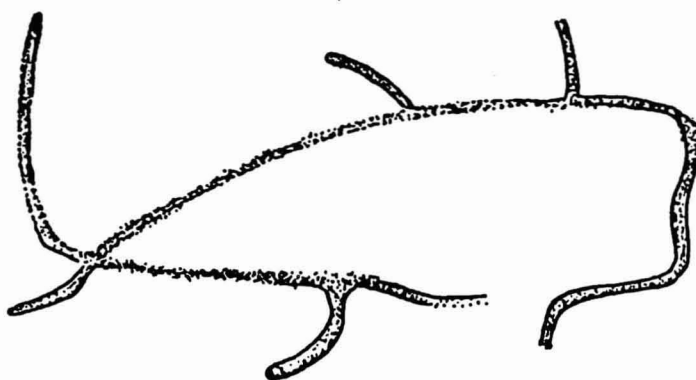
We did, however, see some undecorated, low stone house foundations in the upper part of the valley.

One of the ridges, Tehaetaei, located on the upper eastern part of the valley, was bare due to a recent fire. Thus, this area was surveyed with ease and we found a large concentration of boulders toward the top ridge. Fourteen of the boulders had petroglyphs, with a total of 62 motifs. But, as in the other parts of the region, each stone contains only a few elements.

The large waterfall at the interior of Kauvai valley was reached by part of our team, although with great difficulty due to the seemingly impenetrable *purau* (*hibiscus ticiaceus*) thickets. We found several agricultural terraces and some stone house foundations but no rock art. The lower part of this valley was surveyed last year, and it does contain a large concentration of petroglyphs, a *tohua* (tribal ceremonial area) and numerous stone structures.

Maikuku was visited briefly in 1987 and a few scattered and

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Sea Creature, probably a whale. Hatiheu Valley, Nuku Hiva

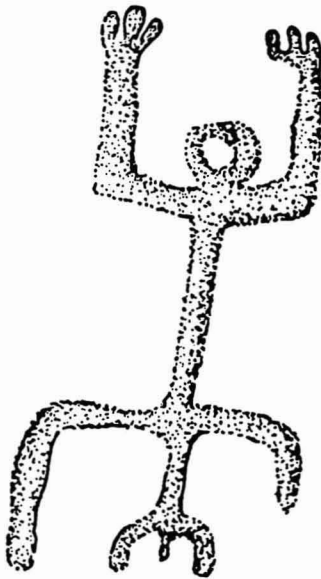
## Marquesas, con't...

locally-known petroglyphs were documented at that time. This year we mapped the Maikuku *tohua* and its associated village structures and found a total of 66 new rock art sites that are associated with the ceremonial area. Twenty two petroglyphs are placed on both sides of an alley that runs between two terraces. The motifs are of dogs and human faces; one type of dog motif seems to be particular to Maikuku as it has not been found in other regions.

Outside the village area, but still in the vicinity of the *tohua*, numerous house foundations were found; many have decorated stones either hidden in the walls or with the motifs turned upside down. It is likely that the structures are of a later date and the stones with petroglyphs were reused. By checking some of Maikuku's petroglyphs at night by artificial light, we found several additional motifs.

Many petroglyph bearing stones have been damaged by intentionally-set fires during copra production. The burning of coconut husks has caused some stones to crack and peel their outer layers. We noted damage from fires at both Maikuku and Tehaetai.

A week was spent in Taipivai Valley, surveying the valley floor. Three rock art sites were documented near the main river and a large *tohua*. We were told this area is called Haetauri, but Linton (1925:114) described it as Uahakekua. Suggs (1961:30) described and excavated part of the site, calling the *tohua* Vahangeku'a.



Lizard/Man Combination.  
Hatiheu Valley.

Ho'oumi was visited, but no rock art sites were seen. One large boulder between Taipivai and Ho'oumi was reported to have carvings but it seems to have been turned over during road construction.

A known rock art site, Vaihi, located on top of the ridge in the vicinity of the ancient road between Taipivai and Taiohae, was documented. Most of the motifs are circles, faces, and stick figures; only one turtle and one dog motif was found.

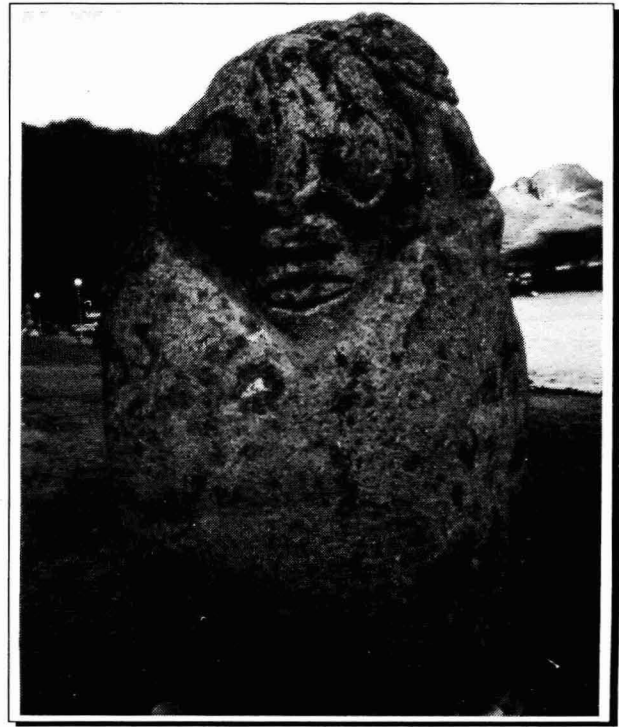
About 50 m higher up on the same ridge is a very large boulder with ancient and modern petroglyphs. The earlier figures were pecked but some were recarved with metal tools.

One of the most recent is a

deeply carved sailing ship with the initials "TT" above it. The southern panel depicts two ponys with the name "poni" incised on the top (the letter Y does not exist in the Polynesian language). The ponys are similar in form to the dog petroglyphs. Several other sites in this area will be investigated next year.

Our crew spent two days in Taiohae, rechecking sites as well as the condition of some *tiki* figures.

A festival at Taiohae on Nuka Hiva brought some 3000 visitors and locals to the village. An archaeological site by the bay had been restored for the occasion and a traditional house built on top of an old stone house foundation. Several carvers from the Marquesas



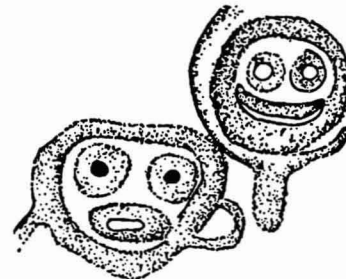
Tiu emerging from an egg.

participated in making 10 new stone sculptures that represent the carvers' interpretation of their past culture.

The brothers Hotu and Petero plus two carvers from Easter Island (now living in Papeete) made two large stone monuments. They were enthusiastically assisted by local artists, finishing the sculptures in two weeks. The sculptures relate to cultural traditions that both the Marquesans and Rapanui share. One, representing a *moai* and a *tiki* emerging from an egg, may refer to the Marquesan legend that describes Tiu, born from an egg. Tiu's grandfather was called Makemake (Handy 1930:125). Or, it may refer to the paramount god Ta'aroa, who is often depicted in contemporary Marquesan art as coming out of an egg. The other, carved of red tuff and basalt, has numerous Makemake and birdman figures on it. It has inlaid eyes of white coral. This festival created renewed interest in the islands' traditional arts and crafts; another festival is scheduled at Atuona, Hiva Oa, in 1991.

Handy, Craighill E.S. 1930. Marquesan Legends. *Bishop Museum Bulletin* 69, Honolulu.

Suggs, Robert C. 1961. The Archaeology of Nuku Hiva, Marquesas Islands, French Polynesia. Vol 49: Part I. *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*. New York.



Portion of a Panel of Human Faces.

## Recent Publications

Thornton, Agathe. Some reflections on traditional Maori carving. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 98(2):147-166. 1989.

Thornton's paper contains interesting (exploratory) interpretations of some postures and motifs in Maori carving that have wider applications, such as some of the forms found in Rapa Nui carvings. The author touches upon joint markings, surface decoration and body parts from ears to collarbones to genitalia. Based upon a study of Maori language and myths, Thornton suggests meanings for the positioning of arms, extended tongues, the importance of the top of the head and the hair, especially in a topknot. The erect penis depicts power, and hands resting on the belly are so placed to protect ritual knowledge and oral traditions, as these were believed to be carried in the belly.

Cotterell, Brian and Johan Kamminga. *Mechanics of Pre-industrial Technology: An introduction to the Mechanics of Ancient and Traditional Material Culture*. Cambridge University Press (forthcoming, January 1990). This book describes the mechanics behind pre-industrial technology and includes a bit about moving Easter Island statues. The authors conclude that Mulloy's method is inefficient, rollers would have been squashed, and the best method would have been dragging them on crushed veggies! (Back to the drawing board).

Cristino, Claudio, Patricia Vargas, Roberto Izaurieta, and Reginald Budd, eds. *Archaeology, Vol.1: papers from the First International Congress, Easter Island and East Polynesia* (1984). Universidad de Chile, Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo, Instituto de Estudios, Isla de Pascua. 1988.

Pollack, Nancy and Ron Crocombe, eds. *French Polynesia: A book of selected readings*. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of South Pacific. 1988.

Ralston, Caroline and Nicholas Thomas (eds.) Sanctity and Power: Gender in Polynesia History. *Journal of Pacific History* XXXII (3-4), Canberra, 1987.

Thomas, Nicholas. Blood and Purity: A comment on the interpretation of Polynesian Culture. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 98(2):207-211. 1989.

The three publications listed below have come to our attention in recent months. They are part of the growing body of literature on

Polynesian voyaging and will be of interest to all those concerned with the settlement of Polynesia and the sailing capabilities of the Polynesian canoe.

Kyselka, Will. *An Ocean in Mind*. Honolulu; University of Hawaii Press, 1987.

Irwin, Geoffrey. Against, Across and Down the Wind: A case for the systematic exploration of the remote Pacific Islands. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 98(2):167-206. 1989.

Finney, Ben, Paul Frost, Richard Rhodes and Nainoa Thompson. Wait for the West Wind. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 98(3):261-302. 1989.

Kyselka's book deals with the cognitive process of noninstrumental navigation and the "learning process" that transforms knowledge and applies it—in this case, the navigation of the Hokule'a from Hawai'i to Tahiti and back again. The book is directed toward the general reader and contains a wealth of information and insights.

Irwin's article suggests that the first exploration of the remote Pacific was navigationally systematic and took place without as much loss of life as is conventionally thought. Beginning with the Lapita peoples, Irwin discusses canoes, navigation, survival strategies, and models for the colonization of Polynesia.

As for navigational limits, Irwin also discusses the subject of Polynesian contact with South America and notes that a case can be made for Oceanic peoples touching upon and defining the continental limits of their ocean. He is not alone in this thinking; many others have privately voiced this theory.

Finney, et al., address the problem of how the Polynesians were able to sail against the trade winds that flow from east and south-east and become increasingly dominant the further east one sails. Sailing the Hokule'a east from Samoa during the Austral winter when the trades are supposed to be the steadiest, they took advantage of westerly wind shifts that develop periodically; the Hokule'a was able to cover the amazing distance of 720 miles between Rarotonga and Tahiti in only 8 1/2 days! This experiment proves that, by adapting to and using the intermittent character of the westerlies, early Polynesian voyagers were able to find and settle all the oceanic islands to the east of their mid-Pacific homeland.

## Habitations, con't...

surface. It was at this depth that the first indications of prehistoric earthen pits were encountered. A total of 42 pits were identified and excavated over a six week period. These features were identified as cooking ovens (*umu*), surface fire hearths, and possible storage pits.

This density of subsurface earthen features was unusual and totally unexpected based on the previous excavation of three habitation sites located within the agricultural zone adjacent to the coast (6-357, 6-352, 6-345). No subsurface features were identified at any of these sites. In addition to the sheer quantity of pits, several of the surface hearths were very large and measured approximately 2 meters in diameter. Several non-fire related pits, presumably storage pits, also had a similar diameter and reached a depth of 1.5 meters.

A functional interpretation of the site awaits a complete analysis of the stone tool assemblage and botanical remains recovered from the flotation of the pit soil matrices. However, the lack of architectural features such as chicken houses and garden enclosures, along with the large number of *umu* without perimeter stones, suggest that the site was of special function and was occupied upon a repetitious but short-term basis. The duration and season(s) of occupation cannot be ascertained at this time. It is possible that the site represents a locality for the processing of plants grown in the cluster of small (1 meter diameter) stone circles located 40 meters to the southeast. The interpretation of these features is also preliminary. The Instituto de Estudios has plans to investigate these stone circles in the near future with the hope of identifying their past use and relationship to Site 10-241.



## Two New Easter Island Blockbusters

### Easter Island: The Mystery Solved

Thor Heyerdahl  
Random House 1989

Review by Paul G. Bahn, Ph.D.

(A version of Bahn's review was originally published  
in the *Times* Literary Supplement, London).

Mysteries sell books, and their alleged solutions even more so. Easter Island has often had its name connected with "mysteries" in the more popular literature, whereas serious scholars regard them merely as problems to be investigated, like those of any other prehistoric culture. So the first disappointment in this book is its title: not only does it refer to a mystery (although specifically which one is never explained by the author) but claims to have solved it. The two major themes explored in the text are the supposed South American origin of Easter Island culture (Heyerdahl's old hobby-horse) and one method by which the great stone statues may have been moved, but neither of these claims have yet been proved to anyone else's satisfaction.

The book is beautifully produced, with many fine colour photographs (no less than 28 of them featuring Heyerdahl himself); oddly, however, as in the French version which appeared earlier in 1989, there is no mention of who translated the text from the original Swedish edition. The lack of an index is extremely irritating.

The package is very readable and, if one had no other knowledge of Easter Island, it would be extremely convincing. However, anyone with even the most basic acquaintance with the subject is well aware that virtually all present-day Easter Island specialists in a variety of disciplines are in fundamental disagreement with most of Heyerdahl's theories. This in no way emerges from the book. In fact, after a very full treatment of scholarly visits to the island up to and including Heyerdahl's own pioneering expedition of 1955, the book leaps to his return there in 1986, thus completely ignoring 30 years of active and important research by a large number of people from different fields. The fact that almost none of their work supports his views in any way may account for this absence.

Heyerdahl's approach to his own data is equally selective and one-sided. While scientists prefer to work from the archaeological and ethnographic evidence, using oral traditions only to provide confirmation or colour here and there, Heyerdahl does the precise opposite: his model starts from a myth, and he then tries (largely in vain) to support this picture with concrete evidence. The linchpin of his whole approach is a legend that the island's first colonisers came from the east (and hence South America); he thus chooses to dismiss other legends, presumably of equal inherent validity, that they came from islands to the west (i.e. East Polynesia). The fact that such folk-tales only began to be collected in the late 19th century, by which time the island's population had come very close to extinction, and that the few survivors may have had a less than perfect knowledge of the old traditions and legends, and besides had acquired terrible knowledge of Peru's existence through slave raids, should encourage the greatest caution, but Heyerdahl plunges ahead with his chosen scenario. Even within his selected story, he regards some bits as gospel (the direction from which the colonists

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### An Uncommon Guide to Easter Island: Exploring the Archaeological Mysteries of Rapa Nui

Georgia Lee

International Resources 1990. Paperback printed on 116 glossy pps. with 6 maps, 85 color photos (with an additional 15 in full or double pages and one in b & w), 7 illust., a time line, index, and glossary of Rapa Nui terms.

Review by Walter Boggs

From the start it was difficult to attempt a review of this book, especially as I was intending to submit it for consideration in an upcoming *RNJ*, Dr. Lee's own international publication. I realized it might be hard for her to accept all the kudos I was prepared to list, sure she would sense her *RNJ* readers might find it hard to accept such high praise as anything but friendly back-slapping. Fear not, Dr. Lee. That her book is *Uncommon* is unquestionable; simply put, it is the best introductory book yet published about Easter Island. And here I begin my praise. From the flowing prose to the sharp, brilliantly reproduced photographs the entire book sweeps the reader onto the Easter Island of today. The focus is sharp and hard hitting, terse at times, but unfailingly informative. Here one will find loads of Rapa Nui secrets found nowhere else, tid-bits of helpful, local information even the seasoned Rapa Nui traveler will find gleefully entertaining.

The section on archaeological sites takes us on a trip around the island, explaining each of the major sites (and some lesser known) giving us helpful local color along the way. After reading this tour, travelers will not only have a clear sense of where everything is (as well as an historical perspective) but they will also have learned where to stop to buy meat, get a drink or find the best places to rest from the hot sun.

The color photographs are excellent. The are crystal clear and for the first time in any book I have yet seen on Rapa Nui, they convey a true sense of the vast, varied beauty of the island. Now finally, a potential visitor can experience a sense of what the island really feels like. Many photos, like the ones taken down in the lake of Rano Kau, the highest point of Rano Raraku, Anakena from the sea, or the north coastline and its rare petroglyphs, all give us views of the island few of us have had or ever will. The full-page maps are well detailed, particularly the one of Hanga Roa Village. (It would have been nice to see a more thorough, full page map of the entire island.)

An excellent addition is the chronological chart. Here we can compare the stages of Rapa Nui history with other world events. It is helpful to realize that construction of the Tahai and Vinapu complexes were beginning at the time Mohammed walked the earth and the Byzantine Empire reached its peak. Such comparisons give us a clear perspective of Rapa Nui's vast history. We no longer need think in terms of ungraspable numbers.

It seems only fair to list a few negative observations, ones readers will notice themselves once they own their own copy. The price of the book stands high. For a paperback, \$18.95 is a steep price. Still, as already mentioned, if this is the price one must pay for the superb color photographs, it was well worth it. I imagine the price would be higher still were it not for the World Monument Fund's generous support—which the publisher greatly acknowl-

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## The Mystery...

came, the description of their land) but rejects other bits as allegorical (e.g. that the first two separate arrivals were brothers, and the fact that even the legend pointing to an eastern origin says the homeland was a group of islands!).

It is important to stress that Heyerdahl accepts, and has always accepted, that Polynesians did eventually come to Easter Island, and it is their traits that dominate its anthropology and culture in later periods. But he believes that they were preceded by colonisers from South America, the traces of whom he has been seeking for decades. Inherent in this view is a belief in the superiority of Ameridians, because despite the well-documented and astounding voyages undertaken by Polynesians who settled islands as far flung as Hawaii and New Zealand, Heyerdahl cannot bring himself to accept that they made it unaided to Easter Island; he suggests (p.173) that Polynesians were "brought to Easter Island, either with their consent or against their will, by navigators from a more culturally developed area of ancient Peru, using either force or cunning. Maybe the 19th century Europeans were not the first to sail from Peru into the Pacific as slave raiders."

This view is also apparent in Heyerdahl's emphasis on the white skin of some islanders, and in his total rejection of the possibility that the island's statues and platforms could have been produced by mere Polynesians rather than cultured Ameridians: "No Polynesian fisherman would have been capable of conceiving, much less building, such a wall" (p.233).

There is no space here for a detailed critique of Heyerdahl's comparisons of Easter Island material culture with that of South America; some are more plausible than others. Undue stress is placed on the stonework and statues of Tiahuanaco, a long discredited analogy; and other features such as supposed "felines" in Easter Island art seem to be figments of Heyerdahl's imagination. The inescapable conclusion is that, while there may possibly have been very sporadic contact and artistic influence between the two places, Peruvian culture is notable by its absence. Heyerdahl himself tells us (p.176) that he proved South American visits to the (far closer) Galapagos Islands by finding thousands of pre-Inca potsherds there. Not a single prehistoric potsherd has ever been found on Easter Island, nor any trace of textiles—yet these are the two most characteristic and abundant products of Peruvian culture.

One false accusation in the book requires correction. Heyerdahl repeatedly claims (pp.139,148,186,190) that Mrs. Routledge, in 1914, dug out only one statue standing below the quarry, had the bad luck to choose a broken one with a crude pegshaped base, and thus assumed that all the statues in such locations were simply heads tapering to a similar base; it was not until Heyerdahl's 1955 expedition that these figures were revealed to be complete bodies on a flat base. This is nonsense: Routledge was well aware that all the statues in the quarry, those by the platforms, and all those lying on the surface has complete bodies, so why should those standing around the quarry be different? In fact she states (p.185 in her book) that she excavated in order to check this very point: "It has originally been thought that the excavation of one or two would give all the information which it was possible to obtain, but...we finally unearthed in this way, wholly or in part, some twenty or thirty statues." Several plates in her book (e.g., figs. 69,72) show fully excavated figures with bodies and flat bases.

The climax of Heyerdahl's book is his recent experiment in moving an upright statue by the swivel method. Once again, he

is being selective in accepting myths: he firmly believes the islanders' legend that the statues "walked" to the platforms, but instead of also accepting that this was accomplished through "*mana*" (supernatural power) he chooses to try the exercise with ropes and men. The experiment is proclaimed a resounding success and a conclusive demonstration: but he fails to mention that the figure was moved only a few meters! As with his famous ocean voyages in primitive craft, Heyerdahl seems to feel that a demonstration of feasibility is a proof of what actually happened. Few would agree, and in the case of statue transport he is ignoring the findings of Van Tilburg who insists that "there is absolutely no indication on any of the 'in transit' statues of wear patterns on the bases, necks or upper torsos which would confirm the use of an upright transport method", and who finds the idea extremely improbable.

Thor Heyerdahl remains a towering figure in Easter Island studies for the colossal contribution made by his 1955 expedition: that contribution involved bringing archaeologists (and notably William Mulloy) and a palynologist to the island, rescuing the Toromiro shrub from extinction, producing the island's first radio-carbon dates, carrying out important technological experiments, and then publishing the results fully and rapidly, as well as capturing the world's imagination with his popular best-seller, *Aku-Aku* and with TV programmes. It is unfortunate that he has allowed his obsession with a South American connection to overshadow the far more interesting and important subjects of the islanders' cultural history, way of life, and environmental destruction. As a result, we have a superficially beautiful but lopsided book which could have become a milestone in the literature on Easter Island, but instead is more likely to be a millstone around the neck of Easter Island scholarship, or to be, at best, totally ignored by serious researchers.

## The Guide...

edges. The publisher's choice of differentiating subject sections of the book by different colored papers is confusing at first: white for introductory materials and travel tips, blue for island history and archaeology; a dull, rose-blush for "Touring the Archaeological Sites;" and then back to white again, for the glossary and index. Although the book may be distracting at first with its rather loose use of different formats and type styles to enhance the photos and text, once one becomes familiar with the general organization, the gems of insight and useful information provided by Lee quickly sweep one away with their down to earth tone.

You would certainly want to have it with you as you explored the island—even when traveling with a guide. Too big for one's pocket, it easily fits in a day-bag. Throughout the book, helpful and specific facts are consistently presented page after page.

Some recent facts are missing although, among them William Liller's recent work on Easter Island archaeoastronomy. There is no mention of the new Mulloy Research Library project or the Shuttle runway extension. Because of the extension, some places on the map no longer exist! (And imagine, *RNJ* was not mentioned either! Lee missed a great chance for a plug!) This was probably because the publisher was working with a deadline. The book was printed in Hong Kong; one can imagine the problems.

Two last words: BUY IT! International Resources, P.O. Box 840 Arroyo Grande, CA 93420-0840. (805) 473-1947.

## Letters

Dear Editor,

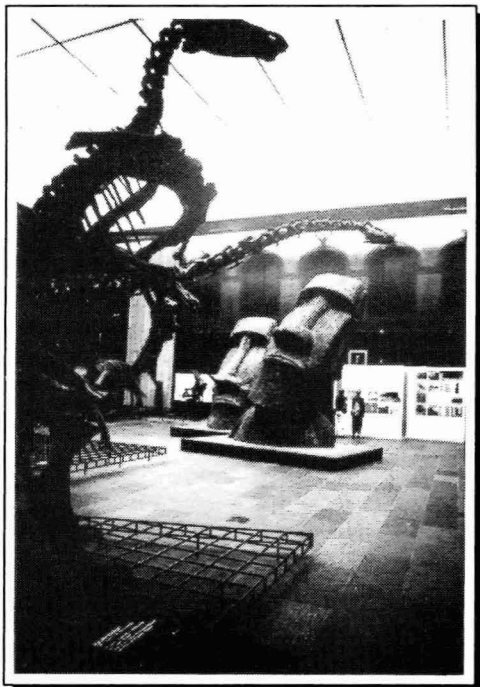
I would like to call the interest of any of your readers who spend time on Rapa Nui to the practice of string-games on the island. String figures (similar to the western cat's cradle, but usually requiring only one pair of hands) are common throughout the world, but are particularly developed in Polynesia. While the string figures of Hawaii and the Marquesas have been studied and documented, those of Rapa Nui have received no more attention than the occasional photograph, although apparently the practice is very common there. It would be interesting to find patterns unique to the island (rather than, say, imported from Tahiti or from westerners). As I am not currently able to visit the island, I would like to call on anyone who is interested to collect string figures there. While the subject is of much ethnological interest, its study is more fun than dry scholarship. Caroline F. Jaynes' *String Figures and How To Make Them* (Dover Books) is the classic on the subject, and shows how to document string figures.

Yoram Meroz,  
San Francisco

Dear Editor,

I am quite enthused about *RNJ*'s concept, its artistic presentation and, above all, about its potential for reaching a much larger audience to inform and enlighten about Rapanui. My congratulations. You are perfectly correct when you write in your letterhead: 'The Premier Source for current Easter Island events...' You have created that 'nerve center' that everyone felt was missing for so long. I am happy that I found *RNJ*. It must only expand.

Dr. Steven R. Fischer,  
West Germany



### Dinosaur and Moai See Eye to Eye

The exhibit of Easter Island artifacts at the Senckenberg Museum in Frankfurt produced these strange bedfellows: a hulking dinosaur looming over a *moai*. Photo by William D. Hyder.

## Austrian TV Documentary Conservation Problems on Easter Island

On October 4th, 1989, a crew from the Austrian Television ORF (Oesterreichischer Rundfunk) arrived at Easter Island. The crew was composed of Dr. Jos. Rosenthal, Director; Josef Steiner, Cameraman; and Bernd Sacherer, Soundmaster. Technical assistance was provided by Prof. Alfred Vendl, director of the ISCA (Institut fuer Silikatchemie und Archaeometrie) of the Hochschule fuer angewandte Kunst in Wien, and Dr. A. Elena Charola, consultant for ICCROM and for the Easter Island projects of the World Monuments Fund.

The documentary is aimed to stress the conservation problems of the cultural heritage of the island, such as *moai* and petroglyphs. These sculptures suffer from various deterioration factors: the nature of the stone which makes them susceptible to the frequent rains on the island; the erosion produced by the wind, carrying either rain drops or sand; the growth of algae, lichens and other plants; the presence of free-ranging cattle, which can roam over some of them; and last, but not least, the "human factor". By this is meant the extra deterioration produced by careless visitors and/or islanders who walk over some of the sculptures, mark petroglyphs for photography, litter or take home some "souvenirs" from the site.

The scope of this film falls within the frame of the objectives set by the "Reunion para el Diagnostico de la Conservacion del Patrimonio de Isla de Pascua", organized by the Direccion de Bibliotecas, Archivos y Museos, Corporacion Nacional Forestal (CONAF), and ICCROM, in Santiago, Chile, March 1988.

Thanks to CONAF personnel on the island, who helped plan the itinerary and accompanied the TV crew during it, the actual filming was carried out in three days. The filming covered some of the most important sites on the island, such as Ahu Nau Nau, Tahai, Ahu Vaihu, Ahu Akivi, Hanga Kio'e, the quarry at Rano Raraku, the petroglyphs at Orongo, Kote Hakanini Mako'i and Tongariki, and the rock paintings at Ana Kai Tangata.

## Volcanic Tuffs Competition

The International Meeting on Lava and Volcanic Tuffs will be the closing event of the Competition called by the Centro Nacional de Restauración. This Competition was organized to encourage the study of lavas and volcanic tuffs. These types of rocks were used on Easter Island for the carving of the monumental statues and unusual petroglyphs. The deterioration of these rocks endangers this cultural heritage, thus the development of conservation measures is urgent.

Awards will be given for the five best contributions. These will be evaluated with regards to their scientific merit and their furthering the understanding of deterioration and conservation problems of these types of stones. They are designed to promote attendance at the meeting and will range from air fare to the Island plus lodging for the duration of the meeting (1st prize) to air fare from Santiago to Easter Island (5th prize).

The papers presented and the discussions held at the Meeting will be published. These Proceedings will be a unique contribution to the field of stone conservation.

The tentative dates for the Meeting are October 25-November 1st, 1990.

# A Layperson's Guide to *Ronoroŋo* Part IV

by Alan Davis-Drake

## How Do I Obtain a *Ronoroŋo* Tablet?

You couldn't buy one, even if you wanted to. Last year it was rumored that someone succeeded in obtaining a *ronoroŋo* through the unsavory route of stealing it. At present I have been unable to verify this rumor, although further rumors indicate the "loss" was temporary, a filing error when the object went on loan.

Today on Rapa Nui the craft of quality wood sculpting continues (and evolves), both with the creation of traditional motifs as

well as the inclusion of traditional designs in more modern sculpted forms. This includes Christian iconographic representations, as well as modern, freestyle sculpting.<sup>9</sup>

On the traditional side such artists as Bene Tuki, while continuing to base their livelihood on carving for tourists, also create commissioned, museum quality duplicates of historical wood carvings for their more discriminating patrons. These are most usually wood *moai* figures (traditionally created in stone) as well as a large variety of other traditional and anthropomorphic designs. The quality of each carving is determined by the market. Many artists (e.g. Bene Aukura Tuki Pate) do not carve *ronoroŋo*.<sup>10</sup> They feel the carving of quality tablets requires patience. The slow, tedious work required does not permit them to be included in their repertoires.

In 1984 women were observed carving tablets because they could do so without using a *kautuki* (the traditional men's tool). They were considered too weak to handle the adze.<sup>11</sup>

Still, *ronoroŋo*-esque carvings are plentiful and the quality varies. Some sculptors indicate that *ronoroŋo* are much easier to make than the more elaborate figures of the popular *moai* or *moai tangata manu*, and young sculptors learn the basic techniques of carving by creating these. Typically made *ronoroŋo* tablets are haphazardly carved. The top sides contain rows of hastily carved glyphs, while the obverse often exhibits combinations of popular motifs: *makemake* faces, birds, fish, sharks, *manu tara*, *tangata*

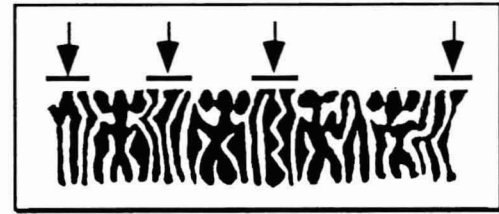


FIGURE 13a: Sample of carving technique on a modern 'Ronoroŋo.' Arrows indicate superfluous markings.

*manu*, dance paddles and etc., much as one would find on island petroglyphs. (Figure 12) A typical *ronoroŋo* measures 11 cm x 16 cm, which a tourist can easily slip into her pocketbook. They are not bulky and are easily transportable—unlike most wooden *moai*, *tangata manu*, *moai kavakava* etc.

Duplicates of the finest museum *ronoroŋo* appear infrequently. This is partially due to the time needed to copy entire rows of specific *ronoroŋo* glyphs. Most sculptors create their glyphs from memory. Many sculptors who consider themselves purists fear that "lesser artisans" show no pride in their work, but instead are only in it for the money.

Obviously, the religious and social need for creating *ronoroŋo* are gone, and the primary impetus for creating sculptures today is economics. Even the purists will sell their "prized pieces" for the right price.

Still, there are a few artisans<sup>12</sup> who claim not to sell for profit. Some artisans devote their time exclusively to producing *ronoroŋo*. One sculptor states that 95% of the carvings he makes are *ronoroŋo*. Each exact reproduction takes him seven to ten days to make in his spare time after his regular work day. He will not sell these precious pieces if he does not feel the buyer has an appreciation for his work and the traditions behind it. These sell for \$400-600 US.<sup>13</sup> 'Tablets' of poor quality (see Figures 13a and 13b) sell for much less and can be purchased using the same bartering methods used to obtain other carvings: all cash, cash and clothing, perfume, medicines. There is always some quantity of money transacted in each deal. Which "goods" are barterable would depend on what you had with you, or what a particular sculptor or his extended family needed at that moment, or he might also exchange your 'goods' on his own in a behind-the-scenes trading with fellow islanders or his creditors.



FIGURE 13b: Sample of Modern 'Ronoroŋo.'



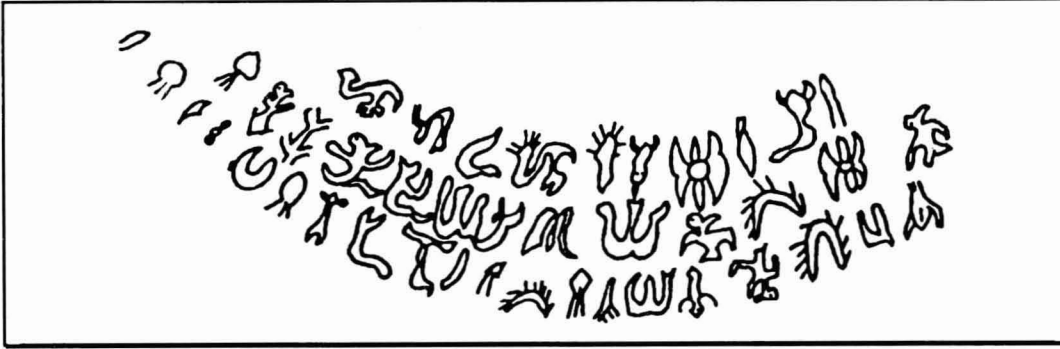


FIGURE 14: Glyphs on a ηara, or Rapanui stone pillow  
(Cambell, et al, 1982)

A number of Chileans living on the island have also taken to carving as a livelihood, or as a supplement to their full time occupations. In all cases these 'non-natives' live with Rapanui mates. A few non-Rapanui sculptors have indicated that many islanders do not show an appreciation for their traditions and so do not create true works of art. These Chileans feel they have a better appreciation for these ancient traditions, although they admit to not being a part of it. They attempt in their own way to reproduce replicas of traditional *ronorono*. The Rapanui response is that there is no place for outsiders within the the Rapanui tradition. Such statements show further realms of tension between the islanders and their Continental 'neighbors.'

The desire to continue the art of reproducing the precise features of the ancient *ronorono* has been largely discontinued. With their original purpose destroyed by internal strife, missionary ignorance, Western exploitation, and the introduction of foreign economics, the "art" of the highly expert *moai ronorono* is gone. Small, less expensive, and thus poorer quality tablet fragments can be purchased at local tourist shops—and of course, for those last minute shoppers, at the airport, on departure. Like miniature Statues of Liberty, they are available in all sizes.

The technique used to create these differ greatly from those of traditional tablets. Extraneous markings proliferate. These markings can be seen in Figure 13a. Except for exact reproductions of museum pieces, modern *ronorono* lack the variety of glyphs found on the traditional tablets. Figure 13b shows a modern tablet with improvised glyphs. Here signs are place upside down indiscriminately within individual lines and boustrophedon is not intimated.

As with other wood carvings created for the tourist trade, the prototypes for modern *ronorono* are photographs of museum pieces found in Stephen-Chauvet's *La Isla de Pascua y Sus Misterios* (1965)<sup>14</sup>, Heyerdahl's *Art of Easter Island* and other publications available in the local library. Such objects have found their way into the archives of museums. For example, the Fonck Museum has one 15 cm. in length (Cat. #1567-281.) Fortunately, it is clearly labeled "Modern." On the other hand, castings of *ronorono*, such as the one on display at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, are not labeled as reproductions.

### Do the Traditions Continue Today?

Although the art of creating *ronorono* on wood and the ceremonious recitation of them have ceased as a tradition, suprisingly, in 1958 Heyerdahl began the process of uncovering 20th century paper manuscripts containing traditions written in romanized Rapanui. To date, six manuscripts have come to light—one has apparently been lost at sea. These manuscripts also contain duplications of *ronorono* glyphs—primarily reproductions of the glyphs on Bishop Jausen's "List"

which were copied during the previous century and brought back to the island by persons unknown—probably Rapanui working on Brander's plantation in Tahiti. The copying by a few Rapanui indicates a desire to possess and pass on what little they know of the *ronorono* traditions and practice. This still continued into the mid 20th century.

Barthel (1965) presented a detailed accounting of each of these manuscripts, lettered A through F. His own subsequent work lead him to uncover what is now refered to as Manuscript F, or *The Gabriel Hereveri Manuscript*. This manuscript was the basis for his book *The Eighth Land: The Polynesian Discovery and Settlement of Easter Island* published in 1975. It is the most detailed analysis of Rapanui traditions to date, and may prove to be his major contribution to Rapanui studies, even more so than the eternally "forthcoming *ronorono* translations."

### Are there Any "Wild" Theories?

Over the last 100 years we have seen documented numerous "odd-ball" theories on *ronorono*. After their initial flurry caused minor blazes of interest, they are now forgotten. Some of these were mentioned in previous sections.

As Rapa Nui continues to attract the curious, such "theories" continue to emerge; still today, we have sputtering theorists probably unworthy of mention. Some, which have contacted me since I began this series, are too curious to ignore.

Tom Gary of Texas, for example, has published a variety of articles and was interviewed on local American television. He proposes that beneath the earth on Rapa Nui there were gasses which could be focused up through the bodies of the famous Easter Island statues and out through their (now newly discovered) coral eyes. Using precise, but hitherto unknown, focusing methods, the "rays" emitted by the *moai* eyes were utilized to finely etch the *ronorono* tablets. He is seeking expert help to create a working model to prove his theory that the *hami* design found on the back of many *moai* is a representation of an esoteric instrument used to read secret writing hidden in the *ronorono* script.

David Hatcher Childress (1988) re-raises the lost continent of Mu, or Lemuria, in connection with *ronorono*. "That Rongo-Rongo writing is very similar, if not identical to [the] ancient unde-

ciphered language [the Indus Valley script] is extraordinary.” His suggestion that deciphering the Indus Valley script with the use of Dravidian (the language of the Indus; cf. Fairervis, 1983) may help in the deciphering of *ronorono*, returns us once again to similar arguments raised against de Hevesy’s methods. Childress suggests that these languages can be linked to “the original language of ‘Mu’—the great sunken continent of the Pacific.

### Are There Parallels with Other Rapa Nui Art?

In 1968 Emory wrote: “If the Easter Island script had existed before 1770, why are there no examples of it on their stone images, ceremonial platforms, cave walls, or on the lava where so many petroglyphs were carved?”

In 1940 Métraux said glyphs of birds on *ronorono* were treated “in exactly the same style as those on the tablets are carved on rocks, especially in caves and at Orongo...” Although he alludes to isolated glyph-like figures which were both carved and painted on rocks and in caves, Métraux states “there is neither a single rock nor a single stone statue on which the inscriptions have been carved.”

As a result of the exhaustive work done by Lee (1986), we now know that echos of the *ronorono* motifs are common in Rapanui rock art. As well as the obvious isolated examples, Figures 14 and 15 show occurrences of groups of *ronorono* on rocks. The *ηara* or stone pillow appears to have some reversed glyphs, although they are not consistent. Closer investigation of this artifact needs to be undertaken.

Barthel (1974) says that “in the rongorongo script, the equivalent of a frigate bird, ‘precious bird’ (*manukura*), is frequently used. The word *kura* seems to refer to the red laryngeal sack of the frigate bird.” The proliferation of this motif is manifest at Matarau at Orongo.<sup>15</sup> He also mentions the *moko* (in various forms) or lizard glyph which has its more common representation in the popular wooden *moko* carving.

Van Tilburg and Lee’s (1987:142) chart of lunate (and boat-shaped) petroglyphs in their work on symbolic stratification may prove interesting to some readers. As a further example, the lunate motif as it echoes the *rei miro* can also be seen in Figure 8, #146, and the second from the last glyph in the London *Rei Miro* (Figure 11) Both figures can be seen in *RNJ* vol 3, no. 4.

The potential for a fruitful comparative analysis is evident in

the accompanying comparative chart: Pocket Road Guide to *Ronorono*. A more detailed study is already underway.

### Coda

Approaching the subject of *ronorono* imitates applying to a private men’s club. The history is clear but the back room jargon is either beyond one’s grasp or unavailable—outside the imagination of the uninitiated. There is the added frustration of discovering that much of the “good stuff” is written in a variety of languages.

Reading Métraux’s 1947 reference to Barthel as “the young anthropologist” and knowing today that Professor Barthel is *re-tired*, brings us to realize how little has been done to bring to the public a qualified translation of the perhaps eternally elusive *ronorono* script of Easter Island.

It should be pointed out that the comments expressed in this series are neither those of a linguist nor cryptographer. They are simply the discursive thoughts of an unranked amateur who took the time to read everything he (or his associates) could find on the subject.

Although this was initially planned as a three part series culminating in a list of *ronorono* and where to visit them, somehow that list and this series grew and grew.<sup>16</sup>

This *Layperson’s Guide* was conceived as a preliminary clarification of historical perspectives and divergent views. The author is currently reworking these haphazard notes into an expanded, coherent form for full publication hopefully next year. In this connection, he would appreciate responses from anyone regarding the accuracy of the facts, statements or analysis presented in this series, as well as lists of any additional sources not noted in the accompanying bibliography.

### NOTES

<sup>9</sup> Much of the information in this section was obtained by private interviews with contemporary sculptors on the island—both Rapanui and Chilean. Their comments must be tempered by the knowledge that some of the responses given to questions were presented in hopes of giving the “correct” answer, that is, the answer the individual felt the interviewer wanted.

<sup>10</sup> Benedicto Aukara Tuki Paté, personal communication, Dec. 1989.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Joan T. Seaver, personal communication, March, 1990.

<sup>12</sup> Numerous local artists were interviewed, including Manuel Federico

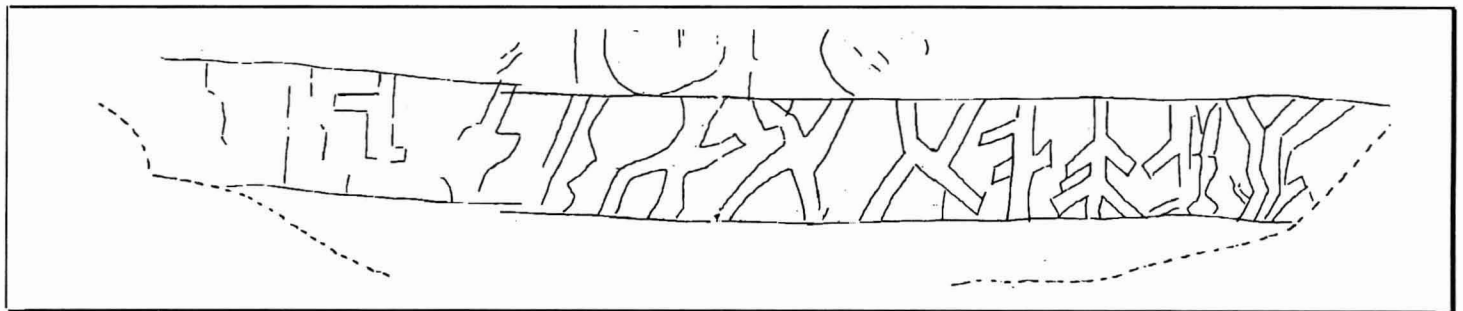


FIGURE 15: Inscriptions on a basalt slab from Orongo, now in the Englert Museum, Rapa Nui. These are outlined figures like the *ronorono* glyphs, yet are similar in form to *tau*. (Drawing courtesy G. Lee.)

Atan, Isaías Hey Chavez, Patricio Hey, José Tuki, Carlos Aguilera, Jorge Hey Chavez, Edmundo Pont, Maxi Pakarati and others.

<sup>13</sup> Questions of price were skirted by nearly all those interviewed. This is a subject for actual negotiations and not otherwise discussed.

<sup>14</sup> These include *Aroukou Kurenga*; *Ka ihi uiga*; *Kohau o te rangā*; *Tahua*, or *The Oar*; the *Small Washington Tablet*, or *A tua matariri*; and the *Jaussen Fragment*, a.k.a the *Stephan-Chauvet Fragment*. Also in this same book is a poorly reproduced copy of *Keiti* (or *Apai* or *Kecti*) which was destroyed during WW I in a fire at the Louvain University Library. The most commonly reproduced is the *Small Washington Tablet*, for it is the most clearly printed in the Stephan-Chauvet book.

<sup>15</sup> Note this is the frigate bird and not the sooty tern. (Lee, 1989.)

<sup>16</sup> Those interested in a more "scientific" perspective may wish to keep a watch out for a forthcoming work by Dr. Steven R. Fischer of West Germany. Scheduled for completion within the next to year is his projected thorough study of the entire *ronorono* corpus including the origins of each. He does not propose to attempt any translations.

## SOURCES

(Since the appearance of the list of *ronorono* sources in RNJ 3,4 certain obvious omissions and additions have come to my attention. They are listed below.)

Barthel, Thomas. 1971. Precontact Writing in Oceania. In *Current Trends in Linguistics*. Vol. 8, Linguistics in Oceania, pp. 1165-1186. Ed. T.A. Sebeok. Mouton, The Hague, Paris.

Blanco, J. 1976. Thomas Barthel et le Déchiffrement de L'écriture Pascuane. *Kadath*. No 20. Nov.-Dec., pp. 13-21. Bruxelles.

Bierbach, A. and H. Cain. 1989. Makemake from Hiva to Rapa Nui. A attempt to shed new light on the old topic of the origin of Rapa Nui Culture. *Baessler-Archiv*. N.F. Vol 36, pp. 399-454. Berlin.

Krupa, V. 1971. "Moon in the Writing of Easter Island. *Oceanic Linguistics*. Vol. 10, No. 1. Summer. Pp. 1-10. Hawaii.

Rjabchicov, S. V. 1989. New Data on Old Rapanui Language. *Sovetskaya Etnografiya*, N 6, pp. 122-125. (In Russian.)

## Pocket Road Guide to *Ronorono*



The following five pages contain a fledgling *Ronorono Road Guide*. Whereas these tables may have been organized in a variety of ways, they are here arranged from the viewpoint of a world traveler wishing to see actual *ronorono* tablets. If one could not visit every location, one could see particular tablets by investigating the published texts noted in the "Reproductions" column. The sources given here are not exhaustive, as the compiler did not have access to all known sources for verification. The reader should note that except for viewing the three fine reproductions in *1500 Jahre Kultur der Osterinsel* (1989), this arm chair method of vicariously viewing *ronorono* can be frustrating. The glyphs are intricate graphic designs and their detail is lost in the printing process. In many cases the "reproductions" indicated in the charts are hand drawings.

Column "C" of the charts notes "Correspondences." This column indicates tablets with similar groups of glyphs. Tablets with duplicate symbols on them are marked either Δ or Ω.

The tablets originally collected by Bishop Jaussen of Tahiti are marked with a J. Romanized early 20th century Rapanui paper manuscripts containing portions of the *Jaussen List* are marked JL.

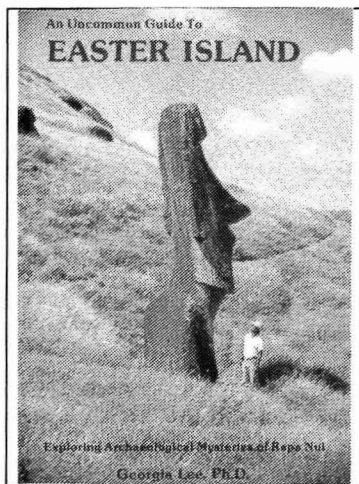
The "Contains" approximates glyph counts. Sources vary. In many cases it is difficult to differentiate between single and composite glyphs.

One may notice this chart is incomplete. As it is the work of a dilettante, it could not have been created without the dedicated research of a few noted scholars, in particular Prof. Thomas Barthel. As it is the first list of its kind in English, additions/corrections would be gratefully received.

## What's New in Hangaroa

Entel has put a new satellite station into service on Rapa Nui. The antenna is 6 meters tall and will replace the current microwave system. There will be 12 telephone channels, thus uniting the island with the rest of Chile via domestic satellite system. [Anyone who has ever tried to telephone to the U.S. from the island—or vice versa—will give a cheer for this new development.]

The National Parks of Chile, CONAF, has sounded an alert with the "Libro Rojo de la Flora Terrestre de Chile," citing that a number of native trees and bushes are in danger of extinction. The toromiro of Easter island is cited as an example of one that has undergone genetic changes: when seeds were planted on the island they were unable to readapt themselves. Outside the island, *toromiro* exists only in private gardens.



### ANNOUNCING

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## • TABLETS

Principle sources Butinov / Knorozov (1956), Heyerdahl (1965 &amp; 1975) and Barthel (1989)

LOCATION	ITEM	C	CONTAINS	SIZE	NOTES	REPRODUCTIONS
Berlin • The Berlin Museum of Mankind	<i>the Berlin Tablet</i>		90 glyphs	1.03 m x 13 cm		
Hamburg • The Wiener Museum of Ethnology	<i>the Small Wiener Tablet</i>		220 glyphs	25.5 x 5.2 cm	Not listed in the Butinov/Knorozov 1956 inventory.	
Leningrad • The Museum of Anthropology & Ethnology of the USSR Academy of Sciences (MAE)	<i>the Large Leningrad Tablet</i>	Δ J	22 lines, 1540 glyphs	62 x 14 cm	Sent to Jausen, Bishop of Axieri, by Father Roussel who had collected tablets on Rapanui over a three year period. Jausen gave this tablet to the Russian ship <i>Vitiaz</i> during its 1871 visit to Tahiti.	Esen-Baur, 1989
	<i>the Small Leningrad Tablet</i>	Δ J	18 lines 900 glyphs	42 x 9 cm	Purchased by N. N. Miklucho-Maklay of the <i>Vitiaz</i> , 1871. Given to the Leningrad Museum in 1891.	
London • The British Museum	<i>the London Tablet</i>	Ω	2 sides 5 lines 150 glyphs	21 x 7.3 cm	1870—may be the <i>rongo rongo</i> which disappeared from the Gana Expedition on its return to Paris. (Imbelloni, 1951) This Tablet was reported to be in private hands for 30 years before it was donated to the British Museum in 1903 by Mr. O. M. Dalton. Dark <i>sophora toromiro</i> .	Dalton, 1904 Routledge, 1919 Stephen-Chauvet, 1945 Heyerdahl, 1975 Heyerdahl, 1989
Louvain, Belgium • The Louvain University Library	<i>Keiti</i> or <i>Apai</i> or <i>Kecti</i>	J	2 sides 17 lines 880 glyphs	39 x 13 cm	Destroyed by fire during WW I, 1914. Photos and a rubbing of this tablet exist.	Thomson, 1889 Lavachery, 1933 Stephen-Chauvet, 1945
Rome, Grottaferrata • Congregation of the Sacred Heart	<i>Aroukou Kurenga</i> , or <i>Aruhu Kurenga</i>	J	2 sides 22 lines 1290 glyphs	41.7 x 16.6 cm	This is the tablet read to Jausen by Metoro in Tahiti, 1890. Only the first line was read. This tablet is erroneously recorded by Thomson as being obtained by Captain Gana and in the Santiago Museum. Thomson gave this tablet its Rapanui name, as he did to others. The names were obtained from his Rapanui "informants." Métraux provides an analyzed list of the glyphs on this tablet in 1940. Métraux (1940) analyzes this tablet.	Thomson, 1889 Métraux, 1940 Stephen-Chauvet, 1945 Wolff, 1948 Métraux, 1957 Esen-Baur, 1989
	<i>Ka ihi uiga</i> <i>Echancrée</i>	J	2 sides 13 lines 270 glyphs	30 cm x 15 cm	Thomson gave this tablet its name. Possibly only a fragment. This is the tablet which Bishop Jausen discovered wrapped in 16 meters of braided human hair.	Thomson, 1889 Stephen-Chauvet, 1945
	<i>Kohau o te rangā</i> or <i>Mamairi</i> or <i>Ate a rangā</i> or <i>Ate a rangā hokan iti Poheraa</i> or <i>Miro</i>	J	28 lines 1000 glyphs	30 x 21 cm	<i>Kohau o te rangā</i> means "tablet of the prisoners" and is considered by Butinov and Knorozov to be the only authentic name among the tablets. Presumed to be the first tablet obtained by Father Gaspard Zumböhm. In 1914 Routledge was told that during the previous century there was still in existence a " <i>rangā</i> ," which was one of the original 167 tablets brought to the island by its founder Hotu Matu'a. It is said to be the only one of its kind and was used as a talisman to capture enemy slaves for manual labor. See Routledge (1919) p. 249, regarding the legend of this tablet.	Thomson, 1889 Stephen-Chauvet, 1945 Esen-Baur, 1989

	<i>Tahua or the Oar</i> Rapa Nui Journal: Journal of the Eastern Polynesian Foundation, Vol. 4 [1990]	J	2 sides 1825 glyphs	91.4 x 11.5 cm 2.6 cm thick max.	The largest tablet in existence today; next to the <i>Santiago Stick</i> , contains the greatest number of glyphs. Discovered 1867 or 1868. <i>Tahau</i> means "oar," and like most other tablet names, is neither the traditional name nor refer to the text. It was carved from European ash, <i>fraxinus excelsior</i> , a European wood often used for oars, indicating a post-European date of creation.	Stephen-Chauvet, 1945
Santiago • El Museo Nacional de Historia Natural	<i>the Large Santiago Tablet</i>	Δ	23lines 1580 glyphs	45 x 11.5 cm	One of three tablets obtained by Captain Gana of the <i>O'Higgins</i> , 1870. Found in the stone house 'Taura Renga' at Rano Kao.	Thomson, 1889 Brown, 1924 Barthel, 1958 Klein, 1988 Heyerdahl, 1989
	<i>the Small Santiago Tablet or Mu'a au Mingo Ata'i Hoa Au</i>	Ω	16lines 720 glyphs	32 x 12 cm	Same circumstances as above.	Harrison, 1874 Klein, 1988 Heyerdahl, 1989
Washington, D.C. • The Smithsonian Institution	<i>the Large Washington Tablet or Eaha to ran ariki kete</i>		2 sides 17 lines 710 glyphs	63 x 12 cm 1.8 cm thick max.	Obtained by Paymaster Thomson of the <i>Mohican</i> in 1886. Carved from a piece of drift-wood ( <i>podocarpus latifolia</i> ) presumably once a portion of a canoe. Partially damaged by fire. Thomson gave this tablet its Rapanui name.	Thomson, 1889 Heyerdahl, 1975 Klein, 1988
	<i>the small Washington Tablet or A tua matariri</i>		8 lines 400 + glyphs	24 x 9 cm 1.6 cm thick max.	Obtained by Paymaster Thomson. Carved on <i>toromiro</i> wood.	Thomson, 1889 Stephen-Chauvet, 1945 Heyerdahl, 1975 Klein, 1988

## • FRAGMENTS

LOCATION	ITEM	C	CONTAINS	SIZE	NOTES	REPRODUCTIONS
Hamburg • The Wien Museum of Ethnology	<i>The Large Wien Tablet</i>		10 lines 220 glyphs	28.5 x 14 cm	Badly damaged tablet not mentioned in the Butinov/Knorozov inventory.	
Honolulu • The Bishop Museum	<i>Honolulu Fragment 1</i>		11 lines	30 x 9 cm		
	<i>Honolulu Fragment 2</i>		4 lines	68 x 8 cm	This is the only fragment currently on display.	
	<i>Honolulu Fragment 3</i>		2 lines	71 x 9 cm		
	<i>Honolulu Fragment 4</i>		1 line	6 x 2 cm	Of doubtful authenticity according to B/K.	
Paris • Stephen-Chauvet Collection	<i>the Jausen Fragment</i>	J	12lines 99 glyphs	11.5 x 8 cm	Originally in the possession of Bishop Jausen.	Stephen-Chauvet, 1945
Vienna • The Ethnological Museum	<i>the Large Vienna Fragment</i>		5 lines 173 glyphs			
	<i>the Small Vienna Fragment</i>		61 glyphs	25.5 x 5.2 cm	Possibly a fake.	Haberlandt, 1892
Santiago • El Museo Nacional de Historia Natural	<i>the Poike Fragment</i>		4 lines 103 glyphs		Found on the slopes of Poike in 1938. Authenticity unquestioned despite circumstances under which it was found and that it is not boustrophedon.	

## • OTHER OBJECTS WITH GLYPHS

LOCATION	ITEM	C	CONTAINS	SIZE	NOTES	REPRODUCTIONS
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<b>Barcelona •</b> Private Collection	<i>The Barcelona Rei miro</i>		1 line 51 signs	29.3 x 22.5 cm 3.3 cm thick	Collected during this century. No antiquity claimed.	Gonell, 1989
<b>California State College</b> • Department of Anthropology	<i>The Physter Bone</i>				Heyerdahl (1975) reports the existence of a "fragment of Physter bone reportedly found in a cave (now in the possession of K.A. Dixon...) completely covered with <i>rongorongo</i> signs that have the aspect of being genuine."	
<b>London •</b> The British Museum	<i>The Large London Rei miro</i>		2 signs	70 cm	Single <i>tangata</i> and <i>ao</i> figure. Donated to the Museum by A. W. Franks in 1870, before commercial carving began.	Heyerdahl, 1975
	<i>The Small London Rei miro , or Te Matumotu o te ahi o te okoro</i>		1 line 50 glyphs	53 cm 1.5 cm thick	Found in New Zealand March 1851, in the possession of the Maori chief Te Rangihaiata at Waikanae. Given to Sir George Grey. This is reported to be the outside world's first glimpse of <i>rongorongo</i> —13 years before the glyphs were discovered on Rapa Nui. It apparently passed uneventfully through numerous hands before recognition.	Heyerdahl, 1975 Barthel, 1989
<b>New York City • The</b> American Museum of Natural History	<i>Moai tangata manu</i>		35-40 glyphs	44 cm	Glyphs are clustered in groups of two or more in various parts of the beak and body. Some are recognizable <i>rongorongo</i> glyphs where others are worn and barely discernable. This birdman figure is reproduced in a color plate in <i>1500 Jahre Kultur der Osterinsel</i> and erroneously labeled as a <i>kohau rongorongo</i> .	Esen-Baur, 1989 Heyerdahl, 1975 Klein, 1988
<b>Santiago •</b> El Museo Nacional de Historia Natural	<i>The Santiago Staff, or the Santiago Stick or the Warder</i>		13 lines 2320 glyphs	1.25 m x 6 cm	Dutroux-Bornier gave this to the officers of the <i>O'Higgins</i> . He thought it was an <i>ariki's</i> weapon. This object contains the greatest number of glyphs.	Brown, 1924; Heyerdahl/Ferdon 1965 Klein, 1988 Heyerdahl, 1989
<b>Sydney •</b> The Australian Museum	<i>Rei miro</i>			32 cm	Before 1870. The glyphs are crudely incised and appear randomly placed—perhaps added in two or more stages. Glyphs are more similar to local petroglyphs than to <i>rongorongo</i> . Was obtained in exchange for a bird musket, revolver and an opera glass. Lower portion rotted away—a good example of damage to a wood carving being stored in a damp cave.	Esen-Baur, 1989
<b>Viña del Mar, Chile •</b> Museo Sociedad Fonck	<i>Kohau rongorongo</i>			15 x 5 cm	A modern reproduction.	Fonck Museum Catalog, 1986
<b>Various Museums and Institutions and Rapanu, in situ •</b>	<i>Incised Rapanu Skulls</i>				Although often referred to as <i>rongorongo</i> glyphs, the incised markings on the cranial frontal bone of buried Rapanui warriors or <i>ariki</i> are most usually lines or consist of a single image, <i>komari</i> being the most common.	Thomson, 1889 Murrill, 1965
<b>Lost •</b>	<i>The Thomson Calabash</i>				Thomson claimed to have collected a calabash "covered with hieroglyphics similar to those found on the incised tablets." It was a "very old specimen obtained from an ancient tomb." This gourd disappeared from the Smithsonian's Easter Island Collection. The seeds of these gourds were said to have been introduced by Hotu Matu'a.	

A or Q = tablets containing corresponding, identical glyphs. J = tablets collected by Bishop Jausen. JL = manuscripts with glyphs from the Jausen List



LOCATION	ITEM	C	CONTAINS	SIZE	NOTES	REPRODUCTIONS
	<i>The "Treaty" Signatures</i>				In 1770 Commodore Gonzales had Rapanui "sign" the document he drafted when declaring the Spanish possession of the island. The signs are unlike the common, standardized <i>rongoongo</i> and are referred to by some as an "inferior" form of the script.	Brown, 1924; Wolff, 1948; Heyerdahl/Ferdon 1965 Barthel, 1989
	<i>The Jausen List</i>		12 pages		Although not directly created by a native Rapanui, this is the list Jausen compiled from 5 tablets—primarily from Metoro's "translation" of the <i>Aroukou Kurenga</i> .	Jausen, 1893; Wolff, 1948; Heyerdahl/Ferdon 1965
	<i>The Tomenika Manuscript</i>		1 fragment		Found by Routledge, 1914. Glyphs on a page from a Chilean register book. Attributed to Tomenika, a leper who died shortly after Routledge's visit. Another reported example of an "inferior" form of script.	Routledge, 1919; Wolff, 1948; Heyerdahl/Ferdon 1965 Barthel, 1989
Lost at Sea •	<i>The Esteban Atan Pakomio Manuscript</i> or <i>Manuscript A</i>	JL	41 pages		As in Manuscripts B-D, this item contains primarily romanized Rapanui, interspersed with short lines of <i>rongoongo</i> . <i>Manuscript A</i> gives lists of different forms including Rapanui rains and the evocation of them, a list of sweet potatoes, two lists of the 30 nights of the lunar month, a list of 28 generations of <i>ariki</i> , a Rapanui translation of portions of the book of Genesis and two lists of signs in <i>rongoongo</i> . Copies portions of the <i>Jausen List</i> as well as the <i>Santiago Stick</i> .	Heyerdahl/Ferdon 1965
Oslo • The Kon-Tiki Museum	<i>The Elias Pakarati Atan Manuscript</i> or <i>Manuscript B</i> or <i>Hare Kai Hiva</i>	JL	18 pages		Copies the <i>Jausen List</i> .	Heyerdahl/Ferdon 1965
Oslo • The Kon-Tiki Museum	<i>The Juan Haoa Manuscript</i> or <i>Manuscript C</i>	JL	34 pages (others missing)		Contains two variants of the <i>Jausen List</i> as well as glyphs with characteristics of those Jausen (1893) says are the signatures of Maori chiefs.	Heyerdahl/Ferdon 1965
Rapanui • In private hands	<i>The Aron Pakarati Manuscript</i> or <i>Manuscript D</i>	JL	13 paper fragments		Probably copied from Manuscript B. Contains portions of the <i>Jausen List</i> .	Heyerdahl/Ferdon 1965
Santiago • In private hands	<i>The Timoteo Pakarati Rangitaki Manuscript</i> or <i>Manuscript E</i> or <i>the Traditions of Pua Ara Hoa</i>	JL	100 + pages		Contains Rapanui traditions, within which are genealogies, lists of local place names, plants, animals, a calendar of lunar nights, fishing grounds, boundary markers, etc. This is the primary source for Barthel's <i>The Eighth Land</i> , 1978, in which can be found the fully transcribed Rapanui text.	Heyerdahl/Ferdon 1965
Rapanui • In private hands	<i>The Gabriel Hereveri Manuscript</i> or <i>Manuscript F</i>		30 pages		Uncovered by Barthel, 1957. Probably originally written by Tomenika at the lepresarium and re-copied in 1955-56.	

Δ or Ω = tablets containing corresponding, identical glyphs. J = tablets collected by Bishop Jausen. JL = manuscripts with glyphs from the *Jausen List*.

# • LEGENDARY TABLETS

LOCATION	ITEM	C	CONTAINS	SIZE	COMMENTS
	<b>Hotu Matu'a's Seventy-Seven Tablets</b>				AD 400/450. Hotu Matu'a, founder of Rapa Nui and its first <i>ariki mau</i> , is said to have brought 77 tablets with him from his western homeland. Englert says there were 67 tablets
	<b>Ngaara's Tablets</b>				19th century. The <i>ariki</i> Ngaara was said to have hundreds of tablets. Upon his death, Ngaara's body was carried to his burial on three large tablets. They were buried with him. 10-15 of his tablets were given to old men and the rest went to his servant Pito. When Pito died the tablets were passed on to Maurata, Ngaara's grandson. When Maurata was taken to Peru he gave the tablets to Také, a relative of Te Haha. Také hid them in a cave and died without revealing their hiding place.
	<b>Kaimoko's Tablets</b>				19th century. Kaimoko was the son of the <i>ariki</i> Ngaara. His tablets were burned in a war.
	<b>Marama's Tablet</b>				? century. Marama accidentally kicked and killed a small boy named Ngungurei. He kept his involvement secret. After ten years Marama became ill and confessed the incident to his brother. He asked his brother to make a tablet that would say "As a stone that rolls did the body of Ngungurei plunge at Ana Tahu. The years are ten." This tablet was recited around the island and when the dead boy's father heard it he demanded a confession, which he got. He had Marama's brothers murdered while Marama watched. Only his younger brother was spared.
	<b>The Lost Roussel Tablet</b>			1.35 m x 40 cm	c 1868. Father Hippolyte Roussel bargained for this tablet in exchange for clothing but the tablet was withdrawn by the seller before the actual exchange took place. It was seen and measured and does not fit the demensions of any known tablet.
	<b>The Paoa Hitaki Tablet</b>				c. Early 20th Cent.. Paoa Hitaki went to Rano Kau with Juan Araki. Paoa performed a <i>conjunto</i> and decended into the crater alone. He returned with a well-preserved tablet, telling Juan there were seven others rotting in his cave below. He gave the tablet to the Company administrator. Soon afterwards Paoa became terminally ill and died—presumably because he gave away the tablet.
	<b>The Beriberi Tablet</b>				1931. Métraux was told of a man named Beriberi who found a fragment of a tablet, but after several members of his family died he burned it, believing the tablet was bewitched.
	<b>The Alberto Ika Tablets</b>				20th Century. Read Heyerdahl (1975) page 106.

Δ or Ω = tablets containing corresponding, identical glyphs. J = tablets collected by Bishop Janssen. JL = manuscripts with glyphs from the Janssen List.

## From El Mercurio, Valpariaso

"The Industrial Corporation for Development of the V Region (CIDERE) has developed a project for the making of aromatic essences on Easter Island. "The idea is to show the people of Isla de Pascua what they can do and at the same time create a small industry," said Juan Enrique Sanchez, agent of CIDERE V Region. The project has been developed thanks to the support of CORFO, the Corporation for Promotion that owns the farm "Vaitea" through an affiliated company on the island.

On this farm, islanders will produce essence of geraniums used in the perfume industry as well as other aromatic species such as eucalyptus. (CIDERE exported 143 tons of essence of eucalyptus last year from their efforts on the continent).

The idea is to develop on Easter Island the exploitation of aromatic species that do not grow well in continental Chile. According to Sanchez, this project was decided upon because the island has a sub-tropical climate similar to other places where there are good quality aromatic essences. As soon as the geranium essence is being produced, it will be sold to tourists and that will serve to promote the incipient industry. The CIDERE agent also stated that "This will show that Isla de Pascua is not so abandoned."

### More from El Mercurio

The vice president of LAN Chile, Oscar Bonillo, said that LAN is having preliminary conversations with the Soviet airline Aeroflot with an end to establishing a cooperative program that would include reciprocal assistance and support of infrastructure. The product of the negotiations could be to permit LAN planes to arrive in Moscow and Soviet planes to land in Santiago. The president of LAN will probably go to Moscow to meet with Aeroflot authorities.

### Métraux Colloquium

An international colloquium titled "Présence d'Alfred Métraux" will be held in Paris at the Palais de l'Unesco from April 26-29. It is organized by the association of the Amis de Georges Bataille.

**See What's New in Hanga Roa on page 10...**

## On Other Islands...

### Sinoto Honored

Dr. Yoshihiko Sinoto, former chairman of Anthropology at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, now occupies the museum's Kenneth Pike Emory Distinguished Chair in Anthropology. The Emory Chair was created by the trustees of the Bishop Museum for Sinoto in recognition of his exceptional career in Polynesian prehistory and his outstanding contribution to the science of archaeology.

Sinoto, delighted with his new status, now plans to spend more time excavating an important archaeological site in French Polynesia—the village of Maeva and its surroundings—at Huahine where he has worked since 1968.

The site at Maeva is unique because eight major chiefs lived there, and each built an ancestral marae (place of worship). In back of the village site, Sinoto found 35 more marae plus 55 habitation sites and agricultural areas. He is involved with establishing Maeva as an historic preserve.

Sinoto is also working on the preservation of the huge stone images on Easter Island, in cooperation with Governor Sergio Rapu.

In Hawaii, Sinoto noted that a stone adz was recovered at Barbers Point in 1980; tests show that the basalt is not from Hawaii, so the adze must have been carried from elsewhere. Other non-Hawaiian adzes have been found in Honolulu Harbor and on Kauai.

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